I: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

619 721 576 the slave's hand and presented it to me with, "Welcome! May it please thee!" Twice he repeated these words, which are a guarantee of peace and safety. Then Faris and Mijhem also drank with him.

000 To us, used to the ways of Western civilization, such a train of events and their result must seem incomprehensible. But after one has lived a length of time with the Bedouins, one learns to understand that the unwritten laws of the Bedouin social code are closely adapted to the conditions of life in the desert and have sufficed, from time immemorial, to meet its manifold circumstances. Without these rules of the game, indeed, all human life in nomad Arabia would have become extinct long since.

619 728 After I had asked, and Ibn Meheyd had granted me, leave to speak, I set forth the object of my mission and exhorted the assembled *shiyukhs*, with what persuasive eloquence I could muster, to make peace with the Ruala, and, as in former years, share the grazing-grounds like [186] brothers. I dwelt on the advantages of unity and the evils of dissension, and drove home my argument by pointing out that by their present policy they were only playing into the hands of foreign powers, who, after all the Bedouin tribes had been weakened individually, would encompass the complete destruction of them all.

My exhortations and arguments were received in cold silence. Most of the chiefs sat with bent heads and tapped the ground with their camel-sticks in apparent boredom. I felt pretty sure, however, that their indifference was assumed, and I would not let myself be dis-

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couraged. Once more I returned to my task and, mustering all powers of persuasion, I redoubled my effort to bring the benefits of good will and a just peace before their eyes. At length I succeeded in persuading them to abandon their hostile silence and to enter into a sort of discussion with me. But anyone who believes that Bedouins can be persuaded at short order is mistaken. Hours passed. It was close on midnight, when Faris begged to be allowed to speak in the name of Amir Fuaz. Ibn Meheyd nodded. "Peace!" said Faris. "Truly, the Enemy of Life is pressing back the living. The milk from the breast of the desert has turned into dust. Like bitter myrrh does it taste to them that thirst. Our wells are dried up, our pastures are scorched by the sun, our camels are perishing in the land of hunger and thirst, thousands are dying on the paths of the earth. Praise unto God that he still keeps his hand open above your heads, but to the Ruala he has closed his heaven. Far be it from us to come as enemies. We would enter your grassland as your guests."

The words made a deep impression. Faris had spoken as a Bedouin. He had spoken a language they had all understood.

The *shiyukhs* withdrew. For perhaps a half-hour they stood under the stars, among camels, horses and sheep, debating and gesticulating. Then they returned and in silence seated themselves in a circle by the camp-fire. Only Rakan, the Chieftain of the Saba, was missing—an indication that he must have fallen out with Ibn Meheyd and the others with regard to the peace conditions. We knew him to be the wiliest of our enemies

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623 and the idea came to me at once that he would try to
728 ambush us on our return journey.
619 After the coffee-cup had circled once more, Ibn Meheyd leaned back on his cushions and said solemnly:

"O ye assembled ones! It is our wish to keep peace with the Ruala. But it is God's will that there is war between Fuaz ibn-Sha'lan, Tra'd ibn-Milhem (Chief of the Wuld'Ali) and our *shiyukhs*. We decree therefore that there be peace between the tribes, but war between the chieftains."

Thereupon Ibn Meheyd offered me his hand. I grasped it and thanked him and the others in the conclave for their willingness to share their grazing-grounds during the coming summer with the Ruala and Wuld'Ali and for allowing the peoples to live side by side in neighbourly amity. I also expressed my hope that the belligerent chieftains would also soon conclude peace among themselves.

It would have been useless to waste more words on the healing of the breach between the *shiyukhs*. If Ibn Meheyd fulfilled their promise of peace between the tribes, I could be more than content with the result of my journey. It would be no less than a miracle.

619 It was still dark when I was roused from sleep by the
728 clatter of cooking utensils. The cook was just putting
577 his water-pots on the glowing fire. Enveloped in its acrid smoke, by the threshold, stood the old mare that had carried me to this tent after the conference. I stepped into the open. It was still night, but the stars were paling and in the east the greenish-grey of dawn mantled the

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desert as with a fine veil. Between the tent-ropes lay our host's camels, chewing the cud. Beyond them spread the softly undulating steppe, and a wonderful fragrance exhaled from it. Everywhere was a stillness and a peace which filled me with awe.

But where were the tents and the herds that at midnight had covered the whole neighbourhood?

I ran into the open a little way and looked about. Far and wide no other tent. Our black shelter lay like a derelict ship on the ocean.

A curious feeling of loneliness came on me for the first time in my life among the Arabs. I had been left with a few companions only, where the evening before thousands had camped round us. Silently the Bedouins had broken camp and they—their women, their children, and their animals—had melted away like a mirage; I could not understand it all.

"Faris! Mijhem!" I called and went to wake the sleepers. Sheykh Nauaf-es-Saleh, in whose tent we had slept, also appeared. I took his hand and asked:

"What does this mean?"

"What doth it mean, thou askest?" he replied. "Ibn Meheyd never breaks his word. The promise he made thee last night he fulfils even this morning."

Ibn Meheyd had evacuated his grazing-grounds to make room for the Ruala!

Nauaf pointed to a group of persons some distance away, now visible in the stronger light. They seemed to be resting, just about where Ibn Meheyd's tent had stood the previous evening.

We rode over and found Ibn Meheyd himself, with

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six men of his bodyguard. They rested on their rugs, Bedouin-fashion, on crossed legs. Beside them was a heap of dead ashes and the three soot-blackened stones on which last night the cook-pots had stood. A brass brazier shed a little warmth, comforting in the chill of the morning. Ibn Meheyd sat holding the wide sleeves of his cloak over it.

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He stood up at our approach and, when I had dismounted, he came up to me and put his arm paternally round my shoulders. "My son," said he pleasantly, "dost thou see that Ibn Meheyd has been true to his promise?"

His eyes said more than the few words. I seized his right hand and pressed it gratefully in both my hands. "May God grant thee all thou wishest!" I said in farewell.

"Come to visit me this summer," he called after me, "and pitch thy tent with the Fid'an. Thou art indeed a Rueyli, but we count thee also as one of us. God be with thee wherever thou goest!"

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date) 1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

539K *Ṭejr* is a trained falcon. *Ḥabâri*, bustards, are ash-gray birds, rather smaller than hens, distinctly clumsy in flight. A falcon trained to catch them is very valuable. A passionate hunter when losing an old falcon will not fail to get a young one and to start at once to train it so that he can hunt again. A passionate fighter does not appreciate peace, but seeks all the time for a reason to fight and to get booty. — This poem is attributed to the widow of the fallen al-Hâdi. He was her trained falcon, while Zejd is her young, whom she has not yet tried.

TREATIES OF PEACE

●728 It is long before a chief decides to sue for peace. He can do so only when he hears from all sides that after all it would be better if both tribes became friends again. A request for peace is hardly ever refused. And yet Prince an-Nûri eben Sa'lân declined three times when Eben Meğlâd, the chief of the Dahâmše, sued for peace, because the latter had not ordered three clans of the Kwâčbe tribe, rebellious subjects of an-Nûri, away from his territory. The offer of peace either verbally or in writing is generally brought by a traveler, very seldom by a slave of the opposing chief. Such an offer is nearly always worded as follows:

"As is known both to you and to ourselves, our people attack yours and your people ours. Ours harm yours, yours harm ours. There is no profit in it either for you or for us. Why this constant injury? Are we not relatives? We do not want to fight you any more. From today we are your friends. All that has happened we have already buried. Decide as you like and then let us know. Greetings!"

The answer usually is: "After a thorough consideration of your offer we inform you of the great joy we feel because you desire our friendship. We do not reject it but must request that our enemies be not allowed to march through your territory to attack us from there, *lâ jetamaṭnâkom w-jaṛirû 'alejna*. This much for your information. Farewell!"

To conclude peace in a solemn manner the prince rides with his suite to the chief of the tribe with which he wishes to be reconciled, or the latter comes to him, and they agree on all points. After the defeat of the Beni Ṣaḫr Prince an-Nûri rode with fifteen companions from al-Azraḳ to the camp

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date)1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

of Eben Fâjez near Žerjet Abu Ğâber and remained there for thirty nights. One fat she-camel was killed in his honor every day. The peace treaty ends with the words: "Interred and buried, *ḥafâr w-defân*," or: "Interred and buried under a steep bank, *damdûm w-ğurfen mahdûm*; a steep river bank has fallen upon its shadow, *ğurfen inhadam 'ala ẓelleh*; no wolf will hurt the sheep any more, *mâ ḏiben ja'di 'ala-š-ša'*."

The chiefs then grasp each other's right hands and say: "I give thee Allâh and the peace of Allâh. And whoever would deceive thee, may Allâh deceive him! I give thee Allâh against all instigation and calumny. *A'ṭajtak allâh w-amân al'âh w-min bâḳak jebûḳeh allâh a'ṭajtak 'an al-mesmesijje w-al-maḥâči-r-radijje.*"

THE TRIBAL EMBLEM, ABU-D-DHÛR

The Rwala have no flag of their own. They go on raids without any special device; but when waging war, whether of aggression or defense, that endangers the whole tribe, they take with them a special kind of a litter, called Abu-d-Dhûr or al-Markab. This is perhaps the old decorated litter 'Aṭfa destined originally for the prettiest girl, who used to lead the tribe to the decisive battle. But there is nobody now who can remember that a girl has ever sat in it. The Markab litter (Fig. 59) is constructed of stout poles, the frame being about 90 centimeters high, 270 centimeters long at the top, and 190 centimeters long and about 50 centimeters wide at the bottom. All the poles are wrapped round with ostrich feathers; to the upper poles are tied 12 short pegs, *zerânîž*, with plumes of bent ostrich feathers, *ṛalab*. To be loaded, the Markab is placed in the litter called *ḥaraǧ*, and this is tied to a camel with ropes, *mečârîb*. The *ḥaḳab* rope is drawn through under the breast, the *bṭâne* under the belly, the *ṭafar* under the tail, and the *lebab*, twisted from variegated camel's hair threads, under the neck. The single parts of the Markab litter (Fig. 58) are called: *ḥaraǧ* (*a*), *'idân al-haraǧ* (*b*), *bdûd* (this because they rest on the cushion, *bedd* (*c*), *ḥoṣra* (*d*), *mibṭâḥ* (*e*), *ǧenûb* (*f*), *ǧerâjed* (*g*), *zerânîž* (*h*), and *ṛalab* (*j*).

The Rwala believe that the litter is called Abu-d-Dhûr, Father of Indefinite Periods of Time, because it is inherited from generation to generation, from age to age, *min ǧîlen ila ǧîl*, and that it will last forever. Al-Markab forms the visible